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## Montmartre and Parisian nightlife

1. Pierre Bonnard, *France Champagne*, 1891, Colour Lithograph  
 2. Lautrec et Trémoloda, *adjoint de Zidler au Moulin-Rouge, devant l'affiche de Jules Chéret*, 1891 © musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Albi  
 3. *La Goulue* © Bibliothèque nationale de France

### 1. 2. ADS HIT THE STREET

At the end of the nineteenth century in France, industrialisation brought with it changes in public tastes and interests which impresarios were to exploit. Along with the apparition of “popular” forms of entertainment made possible by the law of June 30<sup>th</sup> 1880 on the freedom to open drinks outlets and hold public meetings, posters began to proliferate following the promulgation of the law of July 29<sup>th</sup> 1881 which consecrated the freedom of the press and freedom to put up posters. Towns were soon invaded by advertising images and young artists, including Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, were drawn to this street art. The painter and poster artist Jules Chéret introduced and developed the use of colour in lithography. In 1889, he was the author of the poster which launched the Moulin-Rouge dance hall. In admiration of the *France-Champagne* poster designed by Pierre Bonnard in 1891, Lautrec got this artist to take him to see the printer Ancourt where Père Cotelle, one of the workers introduced him to the technique of lithography.

### 3. MOULIN-ROUGE (LA GOULUE)

In 1891, Joseph Oller and Charles Zidler, directors of the “Moulin-Rouge”, commissioned Lautrec to make his first poster; the painter was beginning to get known as an illustrator of the Montmartre night. *Moulin-Rouge, la Goulue* featured the dance hall’s star couple of Louise Weber (1866-1929) nicknamed Goulue and Jacques Renaudin nicknamed Valentin le Désossé (the Boneless), in a real but simplified and powerful vision of the cancan. To create this composition, seemingly so spontaneous, Lautrec made numerous sketches with as much care as for his painted work. The charcoal heightened with colours, *Moulin-Rouge. La Goulue and Valentin the Boneless*, show how Lautrec prepared his posters before transferring them to the stone. Here we see what would become his trademarks already in place: bold page layout, close cropping, compositions based on the diagonals, simplified drawing with curved lines whose rhythm is reinforced by the choice of few colours applied in large flat areas or in crachis, and a concise message. The success of this first effort encouraged Lautrec to move into creating posters and lithographs in general. Lautrec’s innovation lies in the synthesis between the modernity of the subjects chosen in the world of the night, the composition and the wavy lines borrowed from Japanese prints. Between 1891 and 1900, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec created 31 posters and nearly 325 lithographs which made him known to the general public.